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BAPTISTS

Youth minister's retreat refreshes, encourages

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

It's no secret that the needs of teenagers are varied and significant. For those who are called by God to minister to teenagers, the needs are no less acute.

The annual Youth Minister's Retreat, sponsored by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), was held at Lake Tiak O'khata, Louisville, Nov. 6 - 8. Approximately 75 people participated. According to Harvey Ellis, consultant in the MBCB Discipleship and Family Ministry Department, "It's a great time for youth ministers to experience a retreat time just for them. The majority of the attendees are full-time ministers, but others are volunteers and part-timers.

"I want participants to leave refreshed in their walk with Christ. I want them to leave encouraged, to know that the call of their ministries is worthy and significant. And, I want them to leave challenged, to rekindle their vision for ministry."

Two typical participants, Justin Wilcher, who is in transition to a new church, and Virgil Walker, serving Central Church, Meridian, weighed in on the validity of the retreat.

"I've been coming for three years," said Walker, "and I just enjoy being with a group of youth ministers and hearing ideas, hearing what they're going through, how they're handling things. Plus, the speakers are always good."

"Last year was my first year to come," said Wilcher, "and everyone was so welcoming. I got a lot of encouragement from my time here."

"We face a lot of competition from the other activities kids are involved in," said Walker. "Kids are so busy. You have to reach the kids, get to their level, learn what their heart is. It's about building relationships."

Program leaders included Matt Brinkley, metro Atlanta, direct of P.A.C.T. Ministries and a long-time youth ministry specialist. Tom Edwards, worship leader at Eagle Ridge Church, Raymond, provided worship for the conference. Dango (as he prefers to be called), a "music missionary" from Seattle, Wash., with a unique ministry to "alternative" students, also shared during the conference.

When asked what the most significant issues facing youth ministry, Ellis said, "One word that I heard over and over again was 'busyness.' That busyness was in their churches and in and with families. With all the things kids are involved in — school, sports, extracurricular activities — it's hard to find intentional time for real ministry to take place. In trying to provide intentional ministry, you can have so much programmed at church, so much programmed in other areas of their lives, where does intentionality come in?"

Cultural issues ranked high among concerns youth ministers had for their students. "There's such an easy availability of worldly things," said Walker. "Porn, bad music — it's all right there."

"The one distinction we can offer is the love of God," said Wilcher. "Kids come to church sometimes for love from adults. Sometimes we have to be a substitute for [absent] mothers and fathers."



MAKING A POINT — Matt Brinkley, director of P.A.C.T. Ministries in Atlanta, encourages and admonishes the participants at the Youth Minister's Retreat at Lake Tiak O'khata, Louisville, Nov. 6-8. (Photo by Tony Martin)

"It's good to be able to build relationships with other youth ministers," Walker continued. "I've made several friends here, and it's important to have accountability with other youth ministers you can relate to."

"It's important for folks to know that the Mississippi Baptist Convention provides this retreat," said Ellis. "All the youth ministers have to pay for

is lodging and food. When youth ministers come here, they rub shoulders with others, and they learn what else Mississippi Baptists can provide."

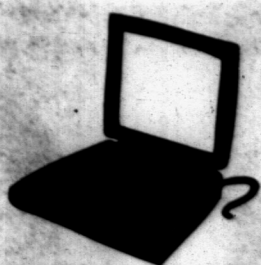
For more information on youth ministry and youth events in Mississippi, contact Ellis at (800) 748-1651, ext. 286, or, in Jackson, at (601)292-3284. Email at hgel-lis@mbcb.org.

Miss. CP dips in October

Gifts to the work of the Lord through the Mississippi Cooperative Program (CP) dropped in October when compared to the previous month, according to Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, which disburses the funds. The October total of \$2,284,352 was 18.3% lower than the \$2,797,991 given last month, and 1.8% higher than the \$2,243,319 given in the same period in 2005. Total Mississippi CP giving for the current fiscal year, which runs from January - December, stands at \$28,200,156, which is 6.2% above last year's giving during the same period and 8.0% ahead of current year budget needs. The 2006 Mississippi CP budget of \$31,314,491 was approved by messengers to the 2005 annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. A total of \$2,609,541 is needed each month to meet the convention board's budget for 2006. In addition to helping support more than 10,700 missionaries in the U.S. and around the world through affiliation with the Southern Baptist Convention, Mississippi CP also helps fund such programs as the Youth Minister's Retreat at Lake Tiak O'Khata, the Preschool/Children's Leadership Festival, and the YEC Challenge at Mississippi College Dec. 28-29.

SBC CP down for month

NASHVILLE, Tn. (BP) — October contributions through the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Cooperative Program (CP) were 3.32% below CP gifts received in October 2005, according to a news release from SBC Executive Committee President and Chief Executive Officer Morris H. Chapman. As of October 31, CP gifts of \$15,358,956 were \$527,687 below the \$15,886,643 received last October. Designated giving of \$2,888,871 during October was 18.67%, or \$663,378, below gifts of \$3,552,248 received last October. For the SBC Cooperative Program Allocation Budget, the October total of \$15,358,956 is 94.06% of the \$16,329,035 budgeted to support Southern Baptist ministries globally and across North America. The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' method of supporting missions and ministry efforts of state and regional conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention. The Cooperative Program total includes receipts from individuals, churches, state conventions and fellowships for distribution according to the 2005-06 Cooperative Program Allocation Budget.



EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

EDITOR
William H. Perkins Jr.
wperkins@mbcb.org

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Tony Martin
tmartin@mbcb.org

LAYOUT/DESIGN
Matt Broome
mbroome@mbcb.org

ADVERTISING
Dana Richardson
drichardson@mbcb.org

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Brenda Quattlebaum
bquattlebaum@mbcb.org

EDITOR EMERITUS
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Baptist Record Advisory Committee:
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Send changes of address to: The
BAPTIST RECORD, P.O. Box 530,
Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

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BAPTIST RECORD, P.O. Box 530,
Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

Tel: (601) 968-3800
Fax: (601) 292-3330
E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org

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Cooperative Program: simply the best

Mississippi Baptists recently bought light bulbs, updated computer systems, acquired the latest Vacation Bible School materials, and helped save thousands of souls across the globe — all with one recurring financial gift to the most brilliant and efficient plan ever devised for fulfilling our Lord's Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20).

The Cooperative Program, utilized by Mississippi Baptists and Southern Baptists everywhere to fund everything from theological education to campgrounds to missions to, yes, light bulbs, is still in pretty good shape 80 years after it was born. Battered and sometimes bruised over the years, the Cooperative Program still stands tall in Kingdom work.

Yet if a poll was taken among Mississippi Baptists specifically and Southern Baptists in general who give faithfully and sacrificially to their churches as to exactly what the Cooperative Program is and what it does, many of us would have to plead ignorance.

"I don't think people fully understand the Cooperative

Program and everything the Cooperative Program is capable of doing," says Candace McRae, treasurer for Trinity Church, Marion. "We need to get that message to the people. The people need to know that as long as there are lost souls, we are not doing enough and we need to do better."

The Cooperative Program is Mississippi Baptists' and Southern Baptists' way of funding a large portion of their local, state, national, and international efforts. In this state, Mississippi Baptist churches receive Cooperative Program gifts from their members, and retain a percentage of those gifts for the Kingdom work of the church. The remainder is forwarded to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board in Jackson. Messengers from the convention's cooperating churches that sent the money gather each year to determine what percentage of the pooled gifts from the churches will be retained for Kingdom work in Mississippi. (Many local churches also set aside an appropriation that is sent to the Baptist association in which they hold membership.)

The remainder is forwarded to the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee in Nashville, which follows instructions from messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in

disbursing the funds received from the state conventions for national and international Kingdom work.

In reality the system is complex and far-reaching, but the concept is simple: the many can accomplish more than the few or the one. At each step of the Cooperative Program process, God's work is increased through the generosity of cheerful givers. As many Christian denominations and organizations struggle for financial survival, we should be praising the Lord for financially looking out for us so well.

David Michel, associate executive director for mission strategy at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, is responsible for Cooperative Program promotion among Mississippi Baptists.

"Beyond the Cooperative Program's historical effectiveness, its interactive potential for linking believers, churches, denominational agencies, missionaries, and unreached people is unlimited. No single church, regional association, state convention, or denominational agency can hope to deploy a world-sized missions network alone," Michel says.

"Yet, by combining resources and energies, Southern Baptists field over 10,000 missionaries through the collaboration of 40 state

conventions, 1,250 associations, and 45,000 churches. The combined strengths represented in that collaboration create a missions infrastructure through which more than 100,000 short-term volunteers serve around the world each year," he points out.

Some Cooperative Program watchers are concerned about its future, with justification. Kosciusko native Morris Chapman, president of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, warned Executive Committee members in February of what he sees as a "dangerous trend." He says that churches are forwarding less of their offerings (as a percentage) now through the Cooperative Program than they were two decades ago. In 1984, he says, the average church forwarded 10.6% of its undesignated receipts through the Cooperative Program while in the 2003-04 fiscal year, that number fell to 6.99%.

The Cooperative Program is a Kingdom triumph. We need to reverse that downward trend as quickly as possible. We owe it to our Lord and Savior.

After what He did for us, it's the least we can do for Him.

Note: This editorial was originally published April 14, 2005.

GUEST OPINION:

Hypocrites

By Art Toalston, editor
Baptist Press, Nashville

I love hypocrites. So many of them are good people who need God's love, such as hypocrites like Ted Haggard and, uh, hypocrites like me and perhaps you.

Haggard, as you know, has been terminated as pastor of a prominent Colorado Springs church and has resigned as president of the National Association of Evangelicals following accusations by a male prostitute that he and Haggard had engaged in homosexual relations. Haggard had used methamphetamine during their alleged encounters.

No doubt there are hypocrites, imperfect people, and even addicts of all kinds within the Christian community.

Rarely are addictions to various forms of depravity easily broken. A relationship with Jesus always will prove to be an uplifting, precious addition to a believer's life, and some believers may see their weaknesses and addictions quickly fall away. For others, struggles with the inner churning of sin may continue to exist after they have turned to Jesus for salvation. Some believers may find that their earlier addictions remain ever-ready to erupt. It may be months or years before all of their sinful habits and inclinations are eradicated.

It is therefore entirely possible for a believer to be what the world calls a "hypocrite," to believe with all of his or her heart that such-and-such a behavior is sinful and yet, in a weak moment, commit that sin. The believer knows that sooner or later, "... you may be sure that your sin will find you out," as Moses declared to the Israelites long ago, as Scripture recounts in Numbers 32:23.

When that moment of truth and tumult finally comes, the believer's faith in Jesus will provide the grace and fortitude to face even public embarrassment or great personal loss, if, ultimately, such tragedy is required in order to attain a long-yearned-for, more complete life of purity with God.

Sadly, we greatly underestimate God's forgiveness, refashioning His grace into something on the level of our humanity. We who have found new birth fail to live in all its glorious dimensions. For non-Christians, this can be especially tragic if the taunts cut short their quest for faith, derailing their dreams of a new birth and a rescue from the despair of godlessness.

Teachings about forgiveness, however, abound in Scripture. Among the most frequently quoted:

• "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin" (Psalm 51:1-2).

• "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus...." (Romans 8:1).

• "... as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:12).

By God's supernatural grace, we gain the opportunity to become as fresh as the first day He entered our lives, poised to venture forth again in ever-more-rejuvenating faith.

If you have not yet embraced God's gift of salvation, know that it is the most wholesome, healthiest experience a person can have this side of heaven. There is not a reason in this world to spend a minute longer separated from God.

Just pray. Ask God to forgive your sins. Ask Jesus to come into your heart. Trust Him with every facet of your life from this day forward.

Begin reading the Bible regularly to grasp more and more of the glory of new birth — and begin searching out a Christ-centered, Bible-believing church where, even if you're a hypocrite at times, you can worship God and become involved in sharing this life-saving faith with all who need a rescue from their sins.

Missionaries overcome fears for service

CAPE GIRARDEAU, Mo. (BP) — One new Southern Baptist missionary knows the fears and anxiety of being in a foreign land, unable to speak the language.

"My discomfort and feeling of helplessness gave me a taste of God's power and glory in my weakness," said the man from Tampa, Fla., who remembers his first volunteer mission trip to Bulgaria in 2001. He and his wife overcame their fears and are headed to an undisclosed location in the Pacific Rim region.

They were two of 67 new Southern Baptist missionaries appointed Oct. 31 at the Show Me Center in Cape Girardeau, Mo. The event, which drew a crowd of about 2,000, brings the total number of International Mission Board (IMB) missionaries to nearly 5,200. It was part of the Missouri Baptist Convention's annual meeting and the IMB's trustee meeting held in St. Louis.

Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) President Frank Page, pastor of First Church in Taylors, S.C., spoke briefly during the service. He challenged the missionaries to "remember who you are." It's a challenge Page said he often gave his children as they left the house.

"You're a Jesus missionary first and foremost," he told the crowd. "Remember who you belong to, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."

One new missionary, who grew up in Alaska, recalled



ACROSS THE GLOBE — A procession of international flags begins an appointment service for 67 new international missionaries at the Show Me Center in Cape Girardeau, Mo., in conjunction with the Missouri Baptist Convention annual meeting. (BP photo by Bill Bangham)

how the Lord revealed her missionary destiny at the age of 16 while reading in a tent in Madagascar during a summer-long mission trip.

"The Lord used a missionary biography to call me to join Him in proclaiming the hope of Christ to the nations," said the 27-year-old woman who will be going to the Ukraine. "Now

after 11 years of a lot of waiting, I'm ready and thrilled to join Him in what He is doing."

Fear the Lord

As the new missionaries prepare to serve around the globe, IMB President Jerry Rankin sympathized with the anxiety and concern they might be feeling.

This is all normal, Rankin explained, but the only One to be feared is the Lord, he told them. Using Psalm 25:12-14 as reference, Rankin explained how fearing the Lord is the solution to overcoming life's challenges and anxiety.

"It's kind of strange to talk about the fear of the Lord," he said. "That's not our concept of God. We see Him as a loving father so ready to bestow grace and mercy upon us."

Believers in Christ should seek to please the Lord through "awe, respect and a worshipful submission," Rankin said.

"We will all stand accountable before God for what we do in our life," he added. "But that's not what the fear of God means. It means an awe-filled reverence to His lordship and recognition of His authority and lordship over our life."

Accept the challenge

Despite all the successes of mission work around the globe, there is "another side to that picture," Rankin said. Last year's Annual Statistical Report showed "unprecedented church growth" around the globe. He cited nearly a half-million new believers baptized and more than 100 new people groups engaged with the Gospel.

Editor's note: To explore service in international missions, visit going.imb.org or call (800) 999-3113.

Christians accused

ISTANBUL, Turkey (BP) — A Turkish prosecutor has filed criminal charges against two converts to Christianity, accusing them of "insulting Turkishness," inciting hatred against Islam, and secretly compiling data on private citizens for a local Bible correspondence course, according to an Oct. 31 report by Compass Direct News, a Christian news agency based in Santa Ana, Calif. Hakan Tastan, 37, and Turan Topal, 46, joined the ranks of 97 other Turkish citizens taken to court in the last 16 months over alleged violations of the country's controversial Article 301 restricting freedom of speech, Compass reported. The attorney for the two Christians, Haydar Polat, said a state prosecutor in the Silivri Criminal Court filed a formal indictment against Tastan and Topal on Oct. 12. If convicted, the accused men could be sentenced from six months to three years in prison, Compass reported, noting that the first hearing for the trial is set for Nov. 23 in Silivri, 45 miles west of Istanbul along the Marmara Sea coast. Polat told Compass the trial could be expected to continue for a year or more. Neither of the men knew they were under investigation until Oct. 11, when two carloads of gendarme officials appeared with a search warrant at Tastan's home at 8 a.m., Compass recounted. The officers informed Tastan that a complaint had been made against him claiming he had unlicensed guns and was conducting illegal missionary activities, Compass reported. Both men said they had categorically denied all the accusations against them, Compass reported, noting that the charges apparently are based on three or four trips they had made to Silivri months ago to meet a teacher and several high school students who had contacted an Istanbul-based Bible correspondence course requesting a visit. "It's all lies," Topal told Compass. "Someone is trying to make us look like a Christian tarikat [banned religious sect]." He said one of the gendarme officials told him he was accused of having weapons, forming illegal cell groups, evangelizing children, and trying to destroy the secular state of Turkey.

Looking back

10 years ago

At least 3,000 people are expected to gather at First Church, Jackson, Dec. 8, to see about 50 new missionaries appointed for overseas work.

20 years ago

The first official Mississippi Pastor's Conference takes place prior to the Mississippi Baptist Convention. Gene Henderson, pastor, First Church, Brandon, chairs the planning committee. Gerald Harris, pastor, Colonial Heights Church, Jackson, is elected president.

60 years ago

The 111th annual session of the Mississippi Baptist Convention sets a Cooperative Program offering goal of \$1 million and okays an objective of enlisting 100,000 tithers for 1947. New officers include Auber J. Wilds, president; Owen Cooper, first vice president; W.G. Mize, second vice president.



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BAPTISTS

THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

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FIGHTING OVER ELMO

One of the hot commodities in toy stores in the approaching Christmas season is Tickle Me Elmo. I remember when the first Elmo arrived decades ago and the storm that he created. I recall the first one I ever saw. I was fascinated with the little creature for you could touch and tickle and he would giggle and shake. The new tickle toy is far more advanced and more sophisticated. Oh he still giggles, laughs, and talks but now he slaps his knee, falls down, rolls over, keeps on laughing, and gets back up. He is an interesting little creature and toy stores are thrilled that people are going bonkers over him. The toy people are not only thrilled that there is a stampede on the part of folks to get one for their kids, grandkids, or maybe secretly for themselves because they know that if they get you in the store you will not only try to buy him but you will buy other things and maybe buy some other toys because you are not able to get the 2006 Edition of Tickle Me Elmo. In September when he hit the market, there were runs on every Tickle Me Elmo delivery that was being made. It wasn't long before reports of the fusses and fights that were breaking out because somebody had grabbed for the little creature at the same time someone else was grabbing for the little dude.

Now the fuzzy, funny little fellow has created hostility between two people who did not think that the situation was so funny. Time and again we begin to hear reports on the national news of folks who are ready to clobber somebody in the jaw because they did not get one of these little mechanical giggling boxes. Personally,



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

I understand what they are going through. Not because I was out there looking for Mr. Elmo but I remember when the Cabbage Patch dolls came on the scene. The same kind of furor existed back in the 80's, and I had a little girl in my home who wanted a Cabbage Patch doll.

As a general rule Mama went out and bought such things, but because of a special time and need for my little girl, I got the assignment to go to the store that was suppose to be getting a shipment. There I was lined-up with the rest of the folks waiting for the doors to open to try to get a Cabbage Patch doll. It was tense. When I showed up there were dozens of people already there and more who were coming. I was caught in the middle of all of them. It was strange. People were looking at each other with suspicion, uneasiness, distrust, and even disdain. I surveyed the crowd to see how many of them I thought I could outrun. Everybody had their own agenda, their own story, and their own strategy of how they would get their way and get their paws on a Cabbage Patch doll. You knew that each one of the people there had a story of a child who desperately and passionately needed a Cabbage Patch doll to fill a particular need in their life. Actually, none of the kids were there. It

was just a bunch of adults who had shown up ready for battle. They had to do whatever it took to get their claws on the Cabbage Patch babies.

Finally, the time arrived, the doors were unlocked, and the stampede began. While I did not want to knock anybody down and did not want to look like I was being overly aggressive, I did get among the lead pack to a stack of newly delivered babies. Since there was a two Cabbage Patch quota in place, I simply grabbed a couple and got out of the way. The herd was behind me as I shuffled off to a safe place. Thankfully, I did not have to get into any scuffles or receive any evil looks as I made my way to the cashier, out the door, and headed to the house. I know what it is like to be pushed to the edge and be caught in an environment where a fuss and a fight could breakout over a piece of cloth shaped like a little doll or this year over a fuzzy piece of cloth with a laugh track inside.

It is amazing what gets folks worked up into an emotional frenzy that in retrospect is so small. But I have learned through the years that people will be people wherever they are. If something catches their attention and stirs their emotions, they will find themselves again and again caught up in the Cabbage Patch/Tickle Me Elmo syndrome.

It happens in churches. I have known of churches in great crisis because of the cutting of a tree and others disturbed because of the planting of trees. I have seen churches upset because they were considering changing the time of worship or their worship services were too long, or in one case the worship service was too short. I have known of churches dealing with the dilemma of some people singing solos too frequently and others perturbed because some people did not sing solos at all. Some congregations have made a huge issue and have become highly emotional over whether they should have pews or padded seats and others struggle over the issue of whether the offering ought to be taken in the middle of the service or at the conclusion of the worship time. The list is endless, but the strange thing about the list is that these are not great theological issues or even issues of eternal weight and value. In retrospect, some of these issues begin to look like a bloody nose received or given over a Tickle Me Elmo.

There are things that I will give my life for, but Tickle Me Elmo is not one of them. We do not know specifically what the Apostle Paul was addressing when the spirit of God led him to write those wonderful words in Ephesians 4:32 when he said, "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ sake hath forgiven you." No doubt whatever the situation was they may in a similar fashion appear again in our world and the same admonition and grace from God is needed among us.

The author may be contacted at
P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-
0530. E-mail: jfutral@mbcb.org.



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sins and freedom from eternal
death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose
from the grave to forgive my
sins and to restore my rela-
tionship with you.
(I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus
Christ into my life. From this
time on, I want to live in a lov-
ing relationship with Him. (I
receive Christ as my Savior
and Lord.)

"But as many as received him,
to them he gave the right to become
children of God, even to those who
believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for
Jesus Christ today, contact a
local Baptist church for spiritu-
al guidance.

STATE CHANGES

1. North Winona, Winona, has called Rusty Fair as pastor. Fair Comes from Enon Church, Batesville, and holds degrees from Mississippi State University and Southwestern Seminary.
2. Lakeside Church, Hattiesburg, has called Roy C. Moody as pastor effective Oct. 29.

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TRACE RIDGE BAPTIST CHURCH,
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What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS

Matthew 10:27 NAS

November 16, 2006

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.

Senior Adult 3rd Annual EVANGELISM RALLY

Tuesday, January 23, 2007 • 8:00 - 11:45 a.m.

Pinelake Baptist Church, Brandon

8:00 a.m.

Registration

8:45 a.m.

General Assembly

9:00 a.m.

Break-Outs:

One Won 1 (Seniors Reaching Seniors)

Sonny Adkins, former State Evangelism

Director, pastor of New Hebron BC

Experiencing Evangelism Through Your Spiritual Gifts

(How to Rewire!) - Ferris Jordan, former professor of NOBTS

and co-author, "Grandparenting by Grace," Baton Rouge, La.

When Senior Adults Pray!

Evelyn Williams, volunteer, Miss. WMU;

State Prayer Advocate; Hickory, Miss.

Motivating Leaders to Reach Boomers/Adapters

Larry Mizell, former Senior Consultant with LifeWay

(Chautauquas), Franklin, Tenn.

10:00 a.m.

Break (Host: MB Baptist Foundation)

10:30 a.m.

Worship Rally

Music - Richard "Dick" Baker, former chairman

of Music Missions and Evangelism at Southwestern

Seminary; noted for songs such as: "Here Is My Life,"

McKinney, Texas

Speaker - Bo Baker has worked in evangelism for over 45 years and has written the words to over 100 songs and hymns.

McKinney, Texas

11:45 a.m.

Adjourn

2007 Deacon Ministry Emphasis

is a plan with specific actions that highlight deacon ministries and involve deacon training and service.

The Purpose Of Deacon Emphasis Is To:

- Focus on their biblical role
- Build team relationships
- Secure involvement in ministries
- Develop skills for ministry

When and How

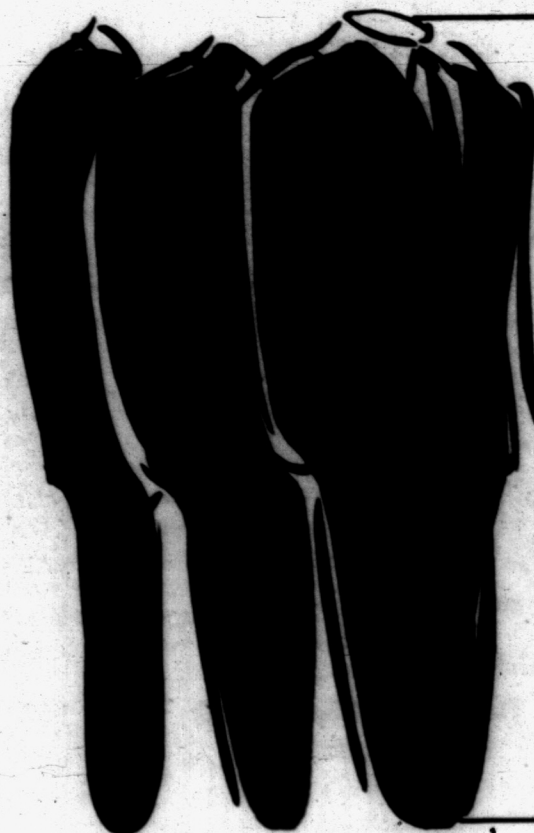
This emphasis may be conducted at any time during the year, however, January 7-13 is designated by the MBCB as the week to emphasize deacon ministry.

To participate, the deacons would choose at least two actions and perform them during a specified time.

Church deacon chairman will receive a brochure in the mail with suggested ideas for activities.

A certificate of recognition will be presented to each deacon body that participates.

For more info, contact Kay McDonnell at 1-800-748-1651, 601-292-3305 or kmcdonnell@mbcb.org



THE SUIT PROJECT

*Merry Christmas to
Southern Baptist pastors
in Minnesota, Wisconsin,
Wyoming and Montana!*

For over 42 years Mississippi Baptists have enjoyed sending new suits to the pastors in new work areas. This is our way of letting the pastors in these areas of Southern Baptist life know that we care about and support them in their work.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Simply make a donation to the ministry. Each suit will cost \$135. This can be a special project for Men's Ministry groups, RAs, GAs, WMU groups, churches or individuals looking for a ministry to really touch someone's life.

WHERE DO I SEND MY DONATION?

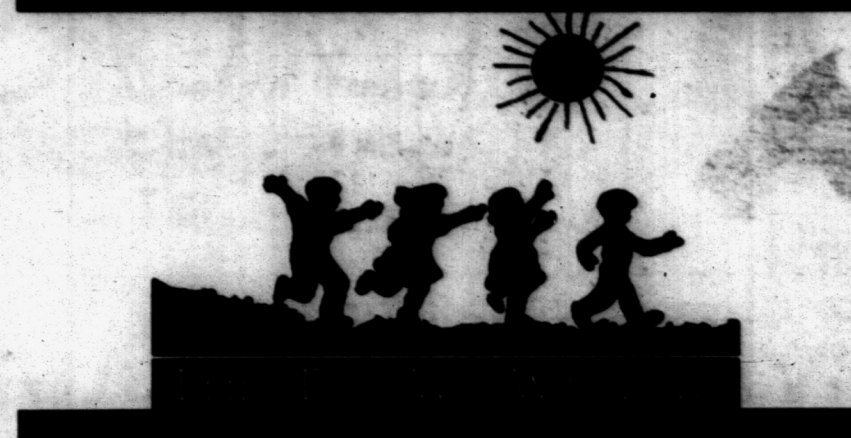
Make your check payable to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board and designate to THE SUIT PROJECT.

MAIL TO: Men's Ministry Department, PO Box 530,
Jackson MS 39205-0530

PASTORS' WIVES: If funds are available, we will send clothing gift certificates for the wives.

QUESTIONS? Contact Deanna Vail: 1-800-748-1651, 601-292-3335 or dvail@mbcb.org

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST
2007 Christian Education Clinics



Highland Baptist Church, Meridian
February 3, 2007

Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Madison
March 3, 2007

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST
2007 Christian Education Clinics
Registration Form

Name of Director or Principal _____
Office Phone _____
Address Line 1 _____
Address Line 2 _____
City _____ Zip Code _____
Name of Center or School _____
Church _____
Association (if applicable) _____
Number to attend _____ at \$16 each = \$ _____
Location Desired (Please check one.) ☐ Meridian ☐ Madison

Please mail this completed form along with the correct fee
(\$16 each — make checks to Mississippi Baptist Convention Board) to:

Mississippi Baptist Convention Board
Discipleship & Family Ministry, PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205-0530

Group check-in begins at 7:30 a.m. A snack will be served between Sessions 2 and 3.
Please keep a copy of this completed registration form for your records.

Advance registration is required and
NO PHONE RESERVATIONS CAN BE ACCEPTED!!!

Please mail your form and fee by January 27 for Meridian and by February 24 for Madison.

For more info:

Discipleship & Family Ministry
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board
Tel: 1.800.748.1651 or 601.292.3287
E-mail: dhicks@mbcb.org

Susie McNair, clinic coordinator
Christian Education Clinics
Tel: 601.932.6052
E-mail: gsmcnair@yahoo.com

METRO SINGLE RESOLUTION

Keynote Speaker and Refreshments

Friday, February 16, 7 p.m.

Broadmoor Baptist Church, Madison

More info: Mark Evans at 601-898-2345

LIFE CONFERENCES

(No cost)

Thursday, February 1
Tate Baptist Church, Corinth
(662-286-2935)

Singleness with a Purpose
Glenn Shows, MBCB, Jackson

Single-Parenting
Dwight Faulkenberry, Fulton
Pathway Counseling Ministries

6:30 p.m. — "Bar-b-que Supper"
Adjourn — 8:30 p.m.

Thursday, March 1
FBC, Grenada
(662-226-3661)

Experiencing Forgiveness
Becky Brown
recording artist
and author, Raymond

"One-Won-1"
(Single Reaching Single)
Glenn Shows, MBCB, Jackson

6:30 p.m. — Baked Potato/Chili
Supper
Adjourn — 8:30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 6
Easthaven Baptist Church
Brookhaven
(601-833-2597)

Singleness with a Purpose
Becky Brown, Raymond

"One-Won-1"
(Singles Reaching Singles)

Don Lum, director, Evangelism Department
MBCB, Jackson

6:30 p.m. — Chili Supper
Adjourn — 8:30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 20
FBC, Kosciusko
(662-289-5575)

BIVOCATIONAL MINISTERS & WIVES RETREAT

December 1, 6 p.m. - December 2, noon

Conference location:

AUBURN BAPTIST CHURCH

1138 Rd. 931
Tupelo, MS 38804
662-842-5638

Accommodations location:

WINGATE INN

186 Stone Creek Rd., Tupelo, MS 38804
Phone: 662-680-8887
www.tupelowingateinn.com

Leaders

Ray Gilder

Bivocational Ministries Director
Tennessee Baptist Convention

Johnny Rakestraw

Pastor
First Baptist Church
Hickory Flat
Certified public accountant

For more information, contact:

Dr. Marc Howard
Phone: 662-566-1700
E-mail: lcba@twol.com

RESERVATION AND REGISTRATION

- A limited number of scholarships are available.
- There is a \$20 preregistration fee that will be refunded to those who attend.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND ACCOMMODATIONS

Contact Marc Howard, associational missions director,
Lee Baptist Association, at 662-566-1700
for information on scholarships and
accommodations at Wingate Inn.

Meals provided by MBCB Pastor/Leadership
Development Department

Host: Lee County Baptist Association

POWER 1:08

December 28-29

SCHEDULE:

Registration begins at 1 p.m.
First Session starts at 2 p.m.
Concludes Friday at 4 p.m.

For more info, contact Harvey Ellis or Beverly Bridges at 1-800-748-1651 or 601-968-3800

FESTIVAL

Recreation

Clowning

Pray this day for...

November 17-December 7, 2006

Prayer Ministry Office • P.O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone 601-292-3304 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1-800-787-7729 (PRAY)

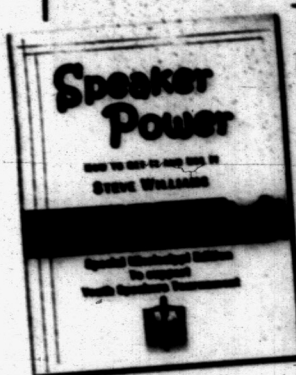
*"How can we search the Scriptures to the greatest advantage?
Have always in view the purpose for which the Scriptures were
written: to show us the way of salvation through Christ."*

Searching the Scriptures by George Whitefield (1714-1770)

17 Grady Gentry is the chaplain for four military and civilian units in Afghanistan. Pray for God's movement in the transportation unit; and that soldiers will experience His love, strength and peace.

18 The Chinese population in Canada is well over a million and growing steadily. Chinese is the number three language used in Canada. Having left excellent professional careers and comfortable lifestyles, these immigrants have landed in Canada to face language barriers, lack of recognition for training and work experience, and low-paying jobs. Please pray for the evangelization of the Mandarin Chinese in Canada.

19 The Borderland Team consisted of five couples working along the U.S.-Mexico border until this past September. Ask God to protect the two couples remaining on the field as they faithfully work to advance His kingdom. Call upon the Lord to move in the hearts of the national brothers and sisters to step up and take the responsibility of sharing the Gospel with their own countrymen.	20 (1) Missionaries, Truman and Carol Chatman, ask you to pray for God to provide a permanent place for the Matute worship group in Lima, Peru. They are still meeting in the apartment of one of the members; (2) Please pray today for George W. Bush of the United States.	21 The Celtic Languages Team of Western Europe writes: "Jesus prayed that the believers would be united. Please join us in agreeing with Him for the believers who speak Celtic languages to become united in purpose and in love. Pray that the evil spirits of pride, competition, jealousy, and unforgiveness will be defeated and that God's people will unite to accomplish His purposes."	22 Pray for Jim Marchetti, missionary in Raintree, Vermont, serving as men's ministry coordinator for Green Mountain Association. Pray as they work to reach the men of Vermont, as they work with the association pastors and for God to continue meeting the Marchetti's needs.	23 Thank you for praying for missionary Ben Sustar, volunteers, and students from Sahel Academy, Zerma of Niger, as they share their testimonies with taxi drivers throughout Niamey. In September, two men accepted Christ as their Savior, and the last Sunday in September, 15 taxi drivers came to church. One of them has offered a meeting place downtown where they can meet regularly.	24 The Gogo Team asks: "Please pray this month that God will help us alleviate severe hunger while showing the tribes in central Tanzania better farming methods that could help them avoid hunger in the future. Pray that as we give them seeds and food, many will understand the Bread of Life and invite Christ to be their personal Savior."	25 Pray for the three largest Baptist churches within the city of Lilongwe, Malawi, to be involved appropriately with associational activities. Pray for them to make a commitment to be leaders according to the principles in God's Word and to seek guidance from the Spirit in how they should support smaller churches.
26 Workers covet your prayers as they write: "Recently we have been seeking opportunities to have a strong influence on the medical community in Hohhot, China. In doing so, we are asking that doors will be opened for us to meet and train like-minded doctors and nurses. We long to see believers in the medical community develop a burden to share with their colleagues and patients."	27 Workers write: "Much to our surprise and delight and to the praise of God, the Bridge music project of the Pacific Rim is back on track. A national partner picked the project back up. We are trying to arrange for one of the nationals working on the project to spend some time in an area where three new groups have emerged among the Bridge people."	28 Thank the Lord for guiding new workers as they begin ministry in southern Thailand. One worker is beginning to train Thai Christians in how to share their faith and start churches that will reproduce. Ask God to open doors and lead him to key people. Pray that seeds of the Gospel will be planted in the hearts of students.	29 Please intercede for the radio station in the interior of the jungles of Suriname and French Guiana. It has been broadcasting Bible stories every day to the Aukan people. Please pray for the equipment and the deejays. Ask that people will hear the stories and come to know Christ as their Savior.	30 Aslam Masih, Duluth, GA, is a national missionary for Middle Easterners and South Asians. Pray that God will raise more leaders/church planters from these groups of people with a kingdom mind-set.	1 Praise the Lord for the three new Muslims who came to V66 (an outreach cafe) this past week among the North Africans of Belgium. Pray that relationships will develop so that workers can share God's love with them.	2 Pastor C, who works among the Shangaan people in southeastern Zimbabwe reported just under 1,000 baptisms last year. His goal this year is 3,000! Pray for him and the lay leaders whom he is training in the new churches that have been planted that this ambitious goal will be met.
3 (1) Pray for the International Missions Emphasis by the WMU Dec. 3-10; (2) The Northern Cape Evangelistic Team of South Africa asks: "Pray for the new believers who have come to know the Lord in the towns around Springbok. A team from Texas found it difficult to start Bible studies in the area because some local religious leaders are warning against attending our Bible studies."	4 (1) The MS Baptist Convention Board Orientation for new Board members, Baptist Building, Jackson, 2 p.m.; (2) Dewey Bland, Beckley, WV, is a staff chaplain at a federal correctional institution. Pray for wisdom, strength, and discernment as he ministers in this difficult setting.	5 (1) The MS Baptist Convention Board Executive Committee Meeting, Baptist Building, Room 201, 9 a.m.; (2) MS Baptist Convention Board Meeting, Baptist Building, Skyroom, 10 a.m.; (3) Michael Nichols, Wildomar, CA, is chairman of chaplains' occupational classification. Pray that the CA Dept. of Corrections and Rehabilitation will add 42 full-time chaplain positions during 2007-2008.	6 (1) Baptist Building STAFF AT HOME DAYS, Dec. 6-8 (2) Please pray for the men and women who are prayerfully considering beginning Bible Schools in their areas. Many have received the training but have yet to begin teaching others. May they know God's will for them in this endeavor.	7 There are now confirmed reports of a second Muslim leader who is following Jesus. Praise God for how He is producing fruit in the lives of Muslims throughout Russia! Pray for protection and boldness for these Muslim leaders who are now convinced that Jesus is the only way to God.		



The Mississippi Edition of **SPEAKER POWER** by Steve Williams is a resource to support Youth Speakers

Tournament. Discipleship and Family Ministry would like to send you a complimentary copy of this new book.

Contact us for a copy:
Discipleship and Family Ministry
Department, P.O. Box 530
Jackson, MS 39205
or Fax to 601-714-7432
[E-mail orders also accepted at
dbrashier@mbcb.org]

Encourage an MK with a card today!

1/3/96
MISS KATELYN R. BROWN
Parents: Donald & Donna Brown
Central & Eastern Europe

1/5/93
MISS MELEAH D. PEACOCK
Parents: Kevin & Brenda
Theological Education; Middle America

1/5/91
MISS CASSANDRA ROBERTSON
Parents: Steve & Ruth Robertson
West Africa

1/8/92
MR. STEVEN D. ALEXANDER
Parents: Mark & Karen
Alexander, Argentina

1/15/05
MR. ISAAC BEAMAN
Parents: Brad & Lenora Beaman
Last Frontier

1/18/06
MISS NAOMI KEYES
Parents: Chadwick & Keyes Logan
Western Europe

1/21/97
MR. CALEB E. HOLYFIELD
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MISS STEPHANIE YOUNG
Parents: Steven & Laura
Student Evangelism; Middle America

1/26/89
MISS HANNAH M. RAY
Parents: Michael & Linda
Strategy; Central & Eastern Europe

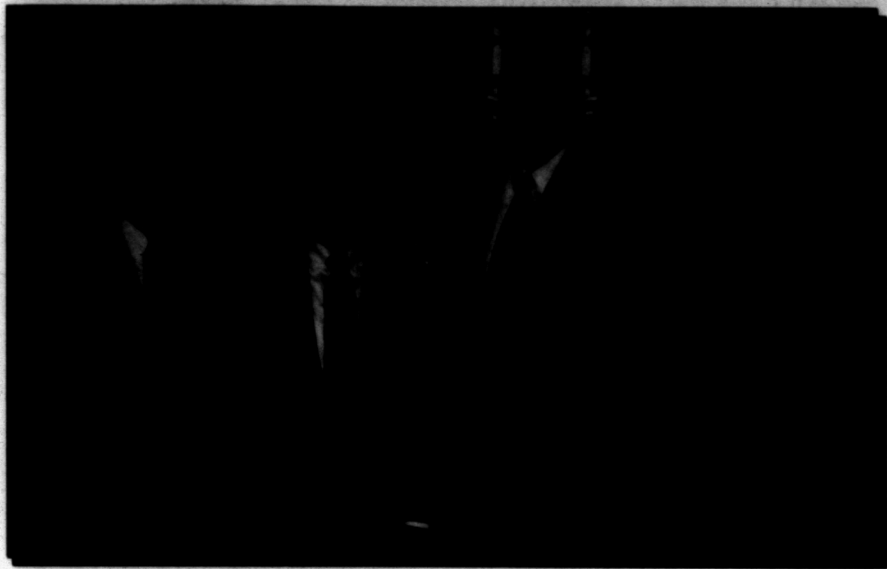
1/27/00
MISS AIMEE YEAGER
Parents: Tommy & Jennifer Yeager
Last Frontier

FOR SECURITY,
cards will be forwarded.
Please send all to:
Child's name,
Parent's name,
MBCB wMu MK
Birthdays,
PO Box 530,
Jackson MS 39205

PLEASE NOTE: Church
members may send a
package of cards together;
cards do not have
to be sent individually
to the wMu.

HOUSE TOPS

JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. Leslie, Johnson, Bien, and Langley, First Church, Byhalia



1. Hamblin, Ballard, Traylor, Pannell, and Langley, First Church, Byhalia

1. **First Church, Byhalia**, celebrated its 140th anniversary with a homecoming celebration. Shown are three former pastors and the current pastor: Arthur Leslie, Chandice Johnson, Glenn Bien, and Anthony Langley. Also recognized for faithful service were four deacons; shown are Mike Hamblin, Bill Ballard, Billy Traylor, Gene Pannell, and Langley.

McGinnis; front row, Joy Fairly, Fairly, and pastor Jim Holcomb.

3. **First Church, Ripley's** children's mission team, Soles 4 Souls, collected 150 pairs of shoes to be sent to Kamanoro, Kenya. Victor Mutumah, Kamanoro, will distribute the shoes as gifts from friends in Mississippi.

4. The youth of **First Church, Columbus**, honored the church's senior citizens with a fish fry Oct. 29, with 155 senior adults and 34 youth attending. Shown are some of the participants.



3. Soles 4 Souls, First Church, Ripley



2. Deacon Ordination, Belden Church, Belden

5. **Cedar View Church, Olive Branch**, will host a community singing on Sat., Nov. 18, 6:00 p.m. The Glory Bound Trio will be featured musicians. Call (662) 895-2661 for more information.

6. **Society Hill Church, Oakvale**, will be having a Lay Renewal, Nov. 17, 18, and 19.



4. Senior Citizen Fish Fry, First Church, Columbus

State-wide STUMP GRINDING PRICE SPECIAL

Good only thru November 22, 2006

Seven or more average size stumps with truck access and no clean up.

\$15 per stump or less with this coupon
(601) 371-8733 or (800) 489-2535 # 3791

Thirty years of stump removal experience in Mississippi.

The Tree Barber
3924 Lake Catherine, Jackson, MS 39212
Wayne K. Barber, President
We do grind uprooted stumps.

OBITUARIES

J. W. Brister of Madison, 76, died Oct. 15 at St. Dominic Hospital, Jackson, following complications of leukemia. Services were Oct. 18 at First Church, Jackson, with Jim Futral and Tom Washburn officiating.

Brister grew up in Terry and was ordained at Terry Church. He held degrees from Mississippi College and New Orleans Seminary. He pastored several churches in Mississippi, most recently Long Beach Church, Long Beach. He was associational missionary in the Gulf Coast Association, director of missions in Austin Association, Austin, Tex., and in Hinds-Madison (Metro) Association, Jackson, retiring in 1994. Afterwards he worked with the stewardship department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. He also served as recording secretary of the Mississippi Baptist Convention from 1991-1997.

He is survived by his wife, Virgie Lois Hutchins Brister of Madison; sons Jay Brister, Canton, and Sam Brister, Austin; sisters Zelma Brister Keller, Clinton, and Ouida Brister Holt, Crystal Springs; brother, Thomas Mitchell Brister, Jackson; and six grandchildren.



LifeWay CHURCH BUSES
Buses are provided for LifeWay by
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America's #1 Church Bus Dealer

Bibliocipher

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ZIC LV HZGOL WIOQ
LGE, KVFGXU, KVFGXU, G
HZU WIOQ UQW,
LVFVZAOVF UV HLZXX
HVV LVZKVI QDVI, ZIC
OLV ZIJVXH QA JQC
ZHBVICGII ZIC CVHB-
VICGII WDQI OLV HQI
QA EZI.

YQLI QIV: AGAOU-QIV

K = V

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke Twenty-Four: Forty-Seven.

Priest Harris
MINISTRIES

- Revival
- Music
- Concerts
- Special Events

Open Dates for 2007:
 ♦ January 7, 21 ♦ April 8
 ♦ February 4, 11, 25 ♦ May 13, 20, 27
 ♦ March 11, 18 ♦ June 3, 10, 17
 www.dcw.net/phea
 e-mail: phea2@aol.com phone: 318.347.4370
 Call about your 2007 date!

JUST FOR THE RECORD



10. Groundbreaking, Big Level Church, Wiggins



11. Deacon Ordination, Macedonia Church, Myrtle

7. **Holly Church, Alcorn Association**, recently dedicated their new Family Life Center Gym/Fellowship Hall. Tony Morrow, pastor.

8. **Goss Church, Goss**, will host the 3rd annual Blessing of the Hunt Nov. 16, 7 p.m. Ben Willoughby, Hattiesburg, guest speaker. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.; program at 7, with refreshments, a deer patterned

quilt auctions, and other crafts and items of interest for deer hunters.

9. **Calvary Church, Oxford**, recently ordained Mike Popernik, Roger Miller, and Charles Brewer as deacons.

10. **Big Level Church, Wiggins**, recently broke ground for an educational building and fellowship hall. Shown are pastor David Perry, Leslie Ross, Jon Bond, James Davis, Kendall Colvin, Kent

Hatten, and other committee members and congregation members.

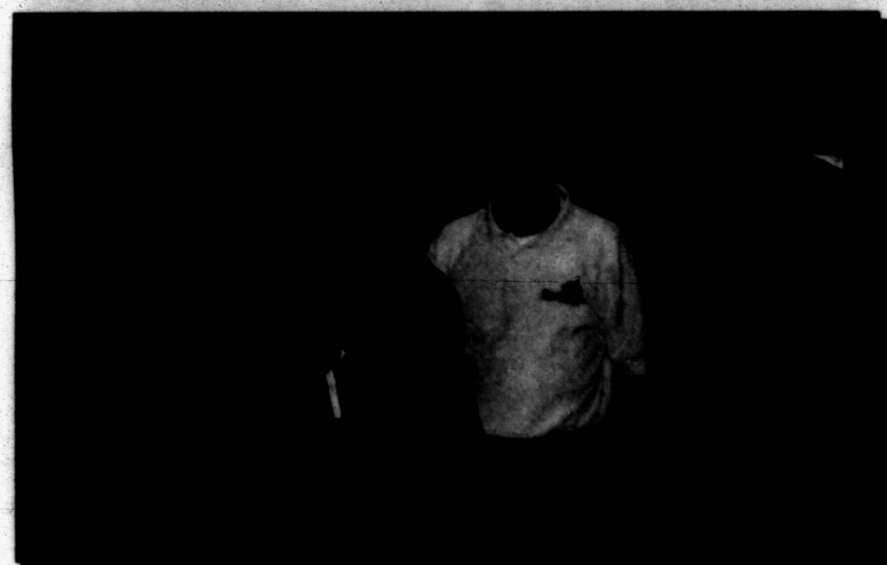
11. **Macedonia Church, Myrtle**, ordained Bobby L. (Bubba) Cobb as deacon Sept. 17. Shown are pastor Wayne Cobb, Bubba Cobb, and AMD Bobby Cobb.

12. **McAdams Church, McAdams**, recently ordained Frank Gowan and Randy Jones as deacons. Shown are Gowan, pastor James Young, and Jones.



12. Deacon Ordinations, McAdams Church, McAdams

COLLEGE NEWS



1. Dowdy, Armstrong, Driskell, and Conner, BMC

1. For the sixth consecutive year, **Blue Mountain College** has been recognized by the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) as a Champions of Character Institution. The program recognizes intercollegiate athletics on college and university campuses that are committed to the true spirit of competition through the five tenets: respect, integrity, responsibility, servant leadership and sportsmanship. For the second year in a row, Blue Mountain College received the Halbrook Award for Academic Achievement Among Athletes in the Independent College Division. Athletic staff pictured: Bill Dowdy (Tennis); Johnnie Armstrong (Athletic Director); Lavon Driskell (Women's Basketball); Jerry Conner (Men's Basketball).

2. **Blue Mountain College** debuted its own line of special blended coffees during the 2006 Founder's Day celebration. Lea Bennett, director of the Office of Alumnae Affairs, worked with Dan Skinner of HighPoint Roasters in New Albany in the development of three BMC Coffees: Mellow Gold, Bold Blue, and Coward's Caboom. The coffees and gift sets are available through the College's Gift Shop and will also be featured during special campus events. On hand for the debut of BMC's Coffee line were (left to right) Bennett, Skinner, President Bettye Rogers Coward, and Joy Hurt Hill, President of the National Alumnae Association.



3. Tinago and Farrell, WCU



2. Bennett, Skinner, Coward, and Hill, BMC

3. The **William Carey University Speech and Debate Team** placed first at the Smelt Classic Speech Tournament held in Longview, Wash. recently. Eighteen colleges and universities competed in the tournament including Oregon State University, the University of Portland, Pacific Lutheran University and Lewis and Clark College. Individual honors went to Maggie Farrell of Laurel. She placed first in prose, dramatic and poetry interpretation. Chiwoneso Tinago of Harare, Zimbabwe placed first in informative and persuasive speaking and second in prose interpretation. Phillip Londeree of Petal placed first in extemporaneous speaking, second in editorial commentary, and third in after dinner speaking. He placed second in varsity parliamentary debate with partner Jonathan Allen of Ellisville. Allen also placed third in informative speaking. John Wold of Johnson City, Ore. placed second in varsity international parliamentary debate. Shown are Tinago and Farrell.

FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

Living in Reality, Not Delusion

Isaiah 40:18-23; 41:5-7; 44:9, 18-20; 45:20-22

By Arthur Story

What do you think of when you hear the word idolatry? Most people tend to immediately imagine someone engaged in the practice of worshipping a man-made object, but idolatry is not limited to this definition. Idolatry is more than replacing the worship of God with a physical object. Idolatry is also substituting a likeness or idea for God. When discussing idolatry most of us initially recall instances recorded in Scripture or images of people such as villagers in remote parts of the world, but idolatry is alive and well today even in America. In fact, idolatry even infects the lives of believers that aren't watchful. This week's study of Isaiah helps us guard against idolatry by revealing the fallacy, fear, and feigning of idolatry that hinder true faith in God.

In Isaiah 40:18-23, the people of Judah are challenged to compare and remember in order to see the fallacy of idolatry. They're called to compare the nature of the one true God with that of false gods (verses 18-20). In particular, Judah needs to see the comparison of God to the Babylonians' god because some were wondering if the Babylonians' destruction of Jerusalem meant that the god of Babylon was more powerful than God. Isaiah's call to compare answers this question. Isaiah points to the fact that God has always existed but idols are made; God isn't dependent on humanity to stand in His sovereignty but idols are dependent on humanity to physically stand; God is the God of both the rich and poor but idols vary for the differing socioeconomic classes; and God acts in people's

Story

lives while idols only adorn people's homes. Building upon these comparisons, Isaiah calls on Judah to remember what God has revealed about Himself to them in formal teaching, in their daily conversations, in discipleship at home, and in natural revelation (verse 21-23). Isaiah 41:5-7 builds on the fallacy of idolatry that was revealed in Isaiah 40:18-23 by revealing the fear that feeds it. The threat of Cyrus' power was concerning to "the islands," the nations west of Judah. Where could they turn for help? In the midst of this fear, those that made and worshipped idols encouraged each other about their gods and complemented each other's gods (verses 6-7). The connection to modern America here is striking. This picture resembles what those who have abandoned God do today. False religions offer encouraging words about each other and willingly work together to address issues. Why do they do it? They do it

because of their fear of the advancement of a secular worldview that threatens the validity of religion. These false religions, these forms of idolatry that have substituted an idea for the real God, have no power so they attempt to prop each other up. In contrast, God stands alone as sovereign even in the midst of a world that refuses to acknowledge His authority.

Isaiah 44:9, 18-20 identifies the feigning that must take place in order to embrace idolatry. Those that make and worship idols can only fake their beliefs because their idols are worthless. Logic fails them. These idolaters should be in constant internal conflict because their cooking fire's ashes consist of the same wood as their idols. Instead, their daily abandonment of truth ensures their blindness to the truth. In contrast, there is no internal conflict for those who serve God. Living out the truth of Scripture is difficult at times, but it doesn't lead to torment or trickery in the lives of believers. Instead, it leads to peace and assurance even in the most difficult times.

In Isaiah 45:20-22, the faith that results when the fallacy, fear, and feigning of idolatry are subjected to truth is identified. Believing a fallacy isn't faith. Fear isn't faith. Feigning isn't faith. Trusting the invisible, immutable God of the universe in all things is faith. Only He is worthy of our devotion. Only He can save.

Is idolatry alive and well in our nation today? Yes, and it isn't limited to those outside of the church. It doesn't manifest itself much in the violating of the second commandment's prohibition against serving carved images, but more so in the violating of the first commandment's prohibition of putting other gods before God (Exodus 20:3-6). Sadly, idolatry has even established a foothold in the lives of believers who have substituted unscriptural ideas about God for God. To guard against idolatry, each of us needs to be sure that every aspect of our view of God lines up with His revelation of Himself in the Bible.

Story is Minister of Education, First Church, Louisville.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Persevere Amid Difficulty

Hebrews 12:1-8, 12-16, 28-29

By Cyndi Grace

Earlier this year I had the opportunity to go on a short-term mission trip to a country skeptical of Christianity. Although we were very careful about what we said and did, we could not shake the feeling that our every move was being watched—looking for one little mistake! Landing in the United States brought relief but I couldn't shake the realization I was still being watched—by non-believers waiting for one slip-up to show Christianity as a sham. Hebrews 12:1 says that very thing. We are being watched and therefore must live a life that will point the world to the only hope—Jesus.

In Ravi Zacharias' autobiography, *Walking from East to West*, he tells of the first time he

went back to India to speak. The person giving his introduction spent 10 minutes telling wonderful things Ravi's father had accomplished in India! The final statement before Ravi was to speak was, "And now we will hear from his son!" Upon reading that I wept! How great it would be if people began to speak of the wonderful attributes of God and before we uttered a word said, "Now we will hear from His son/daughter." How differently we would live if we understood that everything we do is a reflection of whose we are! Because we are called Christians, the world sees us as a reflection of God. Realizing the importance of our actions upon the His Kingdom helps us understand God's discipline in molding us to His will.



Grace

Since our function here on earth is so important, God, our loving Father, must "keep us in line" through discipline. (12: 5-8) God's discipline is something I know a great deal about given that for many years I lived my Christian life within the defined boundaries of no drinking, no smoking etc. Those "boundaries" made me feel very good about myself—as a matter of fact, too good. I had begun looking down my long spiritual nose to those who were less than what I thought they should be. I was so filled with spiritual pride, God had to break me. Someone once told me, "God will break you the easiest way He can." If that is true I was in fact hard-shelled for my breaking required more than three years! That experience included personal failures, physical pain, and family hurts. In the end I was completely broken and ready to be molded by His hand.

Jeremiah 18:3-4 says, "But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him." I was about as marred as they come but emerging from the "potter's wheel" I was stronger and more at peace than ever before. I had discovered that God was indeed a faithful Father! Others began to look different to my broken eyes; they were His children needing guidance rather than judgmental glares. I began to see hurting people rather than sin-filled people; desiring to see others as Jesus does. I did not enjoy the pain of breaking nor do I wish to go through it again but the process caused me to know and trust Him so much more!

We all want God's good blessings but in refusing God's discipline we will miss God's greatest blessings! Verses 12-16 encourage us to accept and endure His discipline for when the lessons are learned, life tends not to be on a spiritual

roller coaster but on a more consistent spiritual plain. We begin to understand His character and faithfulness which affects how we think and live.

When discipline is applied and produces the needed results in our lives, we begin to serve Him with gladness because of the difference He has made. Before my personal "breaking," telling others about Him was an obligation not a joy. I shared out of duty, but now great delight! He has done such an incredible work in my life that I am compelled to share with others my experience. It no longer about me; it is about Him.

Are you willing to be broken for His great blessing? When this "cloud of witnesses" looks upon your life, what is their response? Let it be our prayer that when the world looks at the church, it will see the mighty acts of God and say, "Now let us hear from His children!"

Grace is a women's conference speaker and women's ministry director at Highland Church, Vicksburg.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Baptist Record

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts

are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted.

All news items are subject to editing,

and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

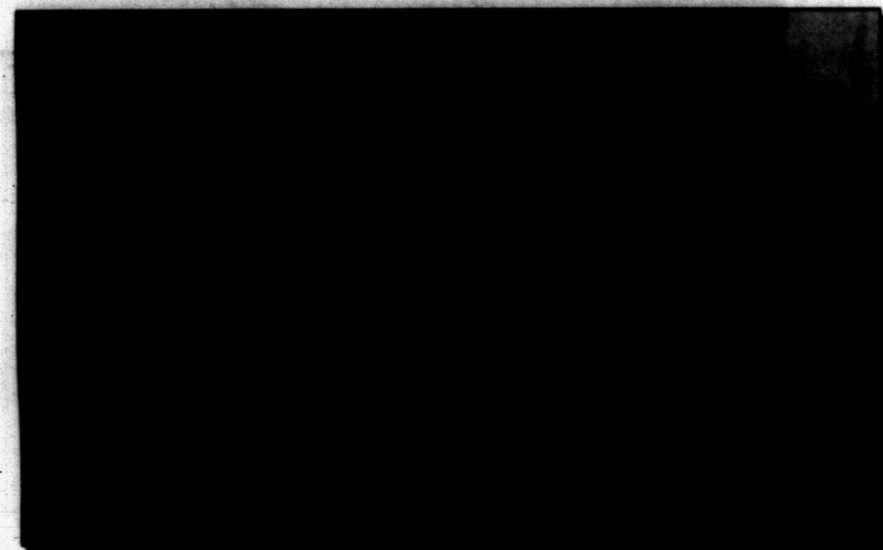
Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.



1. Ables, Purvis, and Wiggins, First Church Polkville



2. Baptist Women's Group, First Church Magee



3. Middleton's head shaved, Calvary Church, Batesville



4. Disaster Relief, Bethsaida Church, Philadelphia

1. First Church, Polkville, recently ordained Mark Purvis as deacon. Shown are pastor Norris Ables, Purvis, and Glenn Wiggins.

2. The Baptist Women's group of First Church, Magee, sponsored a bazaar Nov. 6 to raise money for missions.

3. Paul Middleton, pastor of Calvary Church, Batesville, challenged the congregation to break a Sunday School record attendance of 257. A goal was set of 333, and if that goal was met, Middleton agreed to have his head shaved. On Oct. 29, there were 340 in Sunday School. Middleton's head was shaved by Candice McMillen and Cheryl Beard.

4. Bethsaida Church, Philadelphia, served at Escatawpa Church, Pascagoula, Nov. 2-4, by cleaning and painting at the church and doing other Katrina recovery work for individual church members.

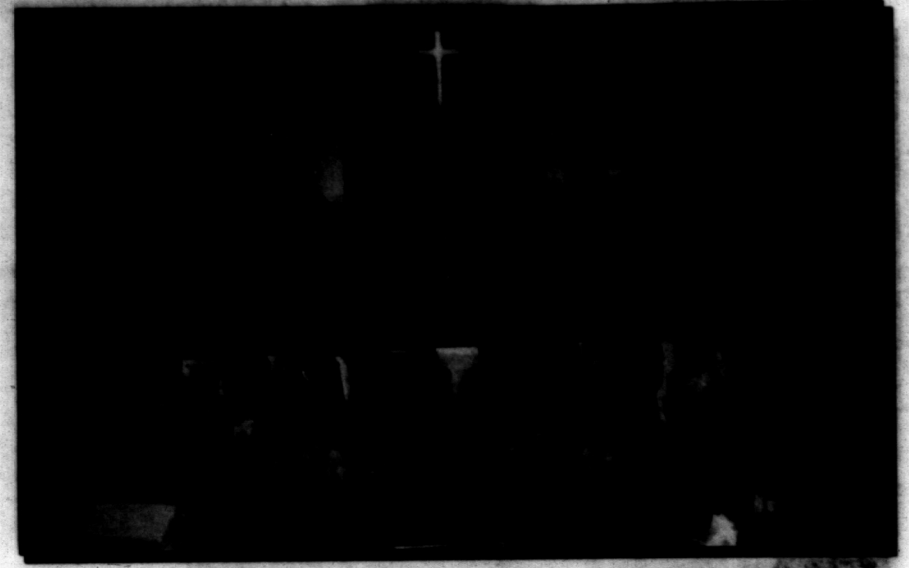
5. Mission Friends, RAs, and GAs of Fredonia Church, New Albany, were recognized Sept. 6. The groups learned scripture and participated in mission projects.

6. New Home Church, Smith County, recently dedicated their new educational annex. Shown are building committee members Joe Ishee, Kenny McCord, Christy McCord, Douglas Stringer, and pastor Ron Swindoll.

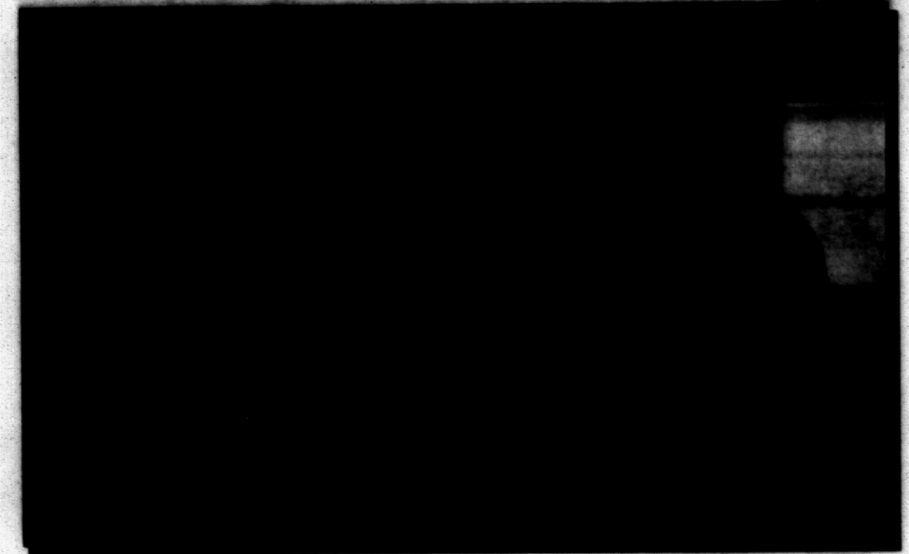
7. Dorsey Church, Mooreville, received a portrait from PFC Ed York. While serving in Iraq, York gave an Iraqi artist a vision of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which the artist painted and gave to York.

8. Ladies from Bartahatchie Church, Caledonia, recently attended a women's retreat at Minor Church, Sikeston, Mo. Approximately 450 women attended the annual event. Shown are Christy MacLaren, Shirley Reeves, Susan Fredrick, Jennifer Box, Carla Ross, Jamie Price, Donna Vaughn, Suzie Atkins, Brenda Spotts, Lisa Vaughn, Mechelle Wood, and Nancy Merchant.

9. Dumpin' Valley Trio will be performing at the following locations and times: Silver Springs Church, Pike Association, Sat. Nov. 18, 1 p.m. and Gillsburg Church, Mississippi Association, Sat., Nov. 18, 6:30 p.m. A love offering will be taken.



5. Mission Friends, RAs, and GAs, Fredonia Church, New Albany



6. Building Committee, New Home Church, Smith County



7. Artwork, Dorsey Church, Mooreville



8. Women's Retreat, Bartahatchie Church, Caledonia